



Citing Failed Strategy in Iraq, Senator Feinstein Cosponsors No-Confidence Resolution on Secretary Rumsfeld's Leadership

September 6, 2006

Washington, DC – *Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today co-sponsored a Sense of the Senate resolution expressing no confidence in the leadership of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and calling for a change of course in Iraq.*

“As a result of failed policies under Secretary Rumsfeld’s leadership, we may well end up with a broken force and an Iraq held captive by civil war. There must be a change in course and a change in those who have managed the war effort,” Senator Feinstein said.

The following is the text of Senator Feinstein’s statement in support of the Resolution, as entered into the Congressional Record:

“I rise today in support of a no-confidence resolution on the leadership of Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Secretary Rumsfeld has overseen a failed strategy, policy, and military tactics for Iraq that have weakened the state of our national and homeland defense. Despite clear evidence that our current strategy is not working, he has stubbornly stuck to a deteriorating course.

We need a new direction. ‘Staying the course’ is not the answer and Secretary Rumsfeld has been the key proponent of this failed policy.

I first publicly called for Secretary Rumsfeld’s resignation six months ago, after watching three years of mismanagement of our war effort in Iraq. And, since that time, I have become more convinced of the importance of changing the leadership at the top of the Department of Defense.

In truth, the Bush Administration’s failed strategy and tactics in Iraq have significantly diminished the United States’ standing in the world and made waging the global war on terror more difficult.

Despite optimistic reports by Pentagon officials regarding the security situation near Baghdad over the past several weeks, it is clear that Iraq is on the edge of civil war.

For example, in recent days news agencies have reported that:

- Forty bodies, 25 of which had been blindfolded and executed by gunshot, were discovered in a mass grave in Baghdad. (NY Times)
- The number of killings in and around Baghdad grew substantially last week despite an American-led security crackdown, with morgues receiving as many bodies as they had during the first three weeks of August combined. (LA Times)
- Finally, the Iraqi parliament voted to extend a state of emergency throughout much of the country – a strong indication that the security situation remains tenuous. (AP)

Yet, we are continuing down the same failed path, buttressing the Shiite-dominated government and preventing it from taking actions necessary to end the insurgency and prevent a full-scale civil war.

As a result of these failed policies under Secretary Rumsfeld's leadership, Iraq continues to be a nation in chaos.

Yes, there is a permanent government in place. But the ministries do not function properly; terror, kidnappings, and assassinations continue on a daily basis. Iranian influence is growing, and Shiite militias dominate the police. Civilian killings now top 3,000 a month, and a Sunni-Shiite civil war is emerging, with U.S. forces caught in the middle.

Despite spending almost \$20 billion on reconstruction efforts, our plan for Iraq reconstruction has stalled as security requirements continue to tax our resources.

Unemployment may be as high as 50 percent, many utilities are not online, and demand for subsidized gasoline (US\$0.55/gallon) has led to a thriving black market and corruption. Oil production has yet to meet revenue goals.

The list of failures in our war policy in Iraq is comprehensive and long:

1) Failed strategic, logistical, and financial planning for the Iraq War

- Secretary Rumsfeld ignored suggestions early on by advisors like Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki, Senators such as John McCain, and reports by well-respected think tanks such as the RAND Corporation, that many more ground troops were needed.
- For questioning Rumsfeld's plan, Gen. Shinseki was effectively forced into early retirement.
- White House economic advisor Lawrence Lindsey found himself out of a job after differing with Rumsfeld in suggesting that the Iraq War might cost up to \$200 billion – Rumsfeld initially argued that it would cost only \$50 billion.
- With the addition of emergency supplemental funding, the cost of the Iraq War has now reached \$320 billion, with spending averaging \$2 billion a week.

- American troops went into combat without the proper equipment and protection. Hundreds of soldiers and Marines were killed or maimed in the early stages of the war due to the lack of appropriate vehicle and body armor.
- Yet, in responding to these concerns, Secretary Rumsfeld famously quipped, “You go to war with the Army you have.”

2) Failed policy of de-Baathification, including abolishing the Iraqi Army with no severance pay or pensions for soldiers

- Perhaps the biggest strategic mistake made by military planners, beyond the lack of adequate troop strength, was the decision to demobilize the standing Iraqi Army, while “blacklisting” other civilian professionals who had been members of the Baathist Party.
- Many of these soldiers, government officials, doctors, lawyers, and other civilian workers, with their jobs eliminated and no money to feed their families chose to join the insurgency that has now grown to an estimated 20,000 individuals.
- Remarkably, Rumsfeld until only recently tried to characterize the insurgency as a group of “foreign fighters,” failing to understand the deep resentment cultivated by American policies in post-Saddam Iraq.

3) Faulty belief that capturing Baghdad meant controlling Iraq

- As related in recent first-hand accounts of the initial invasion, commanders on the ground quickly identified the threat of a guerilla war, but after General William Wallace, who was leading the march toward Baghdad, recommended crushing the small insurgency along the way, he was nearly forced to resign.
- While U.S. forces successfully captured Baghdad within 3 weeks, this strategy allowed an insurgency to grow within the Sunni triangle and hundreds of foreign fighters to stream across Iraq’s unguarded borders.

4) Failure to manage the chaos in the aftermath of the invasion

- Some of the first signs that the U.S. lacked adequate troops were the pictures of Iraqis rioting and looting in several key cities immediately following the invasion.
- Rumsfeld dismissed the chaos as a symbol of “freedom and democracy,” simply saying “stuff happens.” Sadly, it demonstrated to all Iraqis that American military resources were limited.
- This shortage of U.S. troops also resulted in a failure to secure munition dumps and small arms that were stashed throughout the country.

- The insurgency was able to thrive through access to these munitions and weapons caches, and many American troops have been killed or injured from bombs or RPGs that could have been secured in the initial invasion, had we had enough troops.

5) Failure to stop abuse and torture

- One of the greatest stains on America's reputation that will come out of the war effort is our failure to properly protect the rights of those detained by our military.
- While most of our men and women have served honorably, it is clear that the Pentagon allowed a culture of abuse to develop in prisons such as Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and Camp Nama.
- Yet, despite the clear evidence of detainee abuse, no high-level official has been held accountable for these actions.

6) Failure to maintain military readiness

- The Iraq War has taken a significant toll on the state and preparedness of our military. Our armed forces are stretched thin; our men and women in uniform over-burdened.
- Last month, the Marine Corps was forced to issue call-up orders for 2,500 from its Individual Ready Reserve – the first time it has had to do so since the war started.
- Top Army commanders have suggested that 2/3 of all Army brigades do not meet the necessary state of readiness, and National Guard chief, Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, estimates that 2/3 of the National Guard cannot even be deployed today.
- Equipment is fast wearing out. It is estimated that the Army and Marines will need a combined \$75 billion over the next five years for maintenance, repair, and replacement alone.

As a result of failed policies under Secretary Rumsfeld's leadership, we may well end up with a broken force and an Iraq held captive by civil war.

There must be a change in course and a change in those who have managed the war effort. This is critical if we want to have any chance for success in Iraq.

Just last week, Secretary Rumsfeld employed truly shameful rhetoric by comparing those who have criticized the Iraq War with those who "appease[d]" the Nazis in the run-up to World War II.

In the speech at the American Legion conference in Salt Lake City, Rumsfeld stated:

'Once again, we face similar challenges in efforts to confront the rising threat of a new type of fascism ... but some seem not to have learned history's lessons.'

Questioning the patriotism of those who might not support the war, he said:

‘The struggle we are in is too important – the consequences too severe – to have the luxury of returning to the “blame America first” mentality.’

These baseless, partisan attacks are simply over-the-top and are being used to fill a gaping vacuum created by the lack of a successful plan for Iraq.

It is clear to me that this Administration, led by the President and Secretary Rumsfeld, has been wrong at almost every turn. Still, Secretary Rumsfeld remains in place, despite a growing number of bipartisan calls for the President to replace him.

Consequently, I believe that now is the time for the Senate to assert its oversight role and move forward with a vote of no-confidence.

Ultimately, it is true that President Bush is responsible for the failures in Iraq, but no Bush Administration official was closer to the war planning than Defense Secretary Rumsfeld. Secretary Rumsfeld was and remains the chief architect of the strategy and policy in Iraq.

Consequently, it is time for President Bush to ask for Secretary Rumsfeld’s resignation and pursue a course correction under new Pentagon leadership.

There must be accountability for the disastrous policy pursued in Iraq. It is time to bring in a new team to run our military. Secretary Rumsfeld must step down. Our men and women in uniform deserve better.

Thank you and I yield the floor.”

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